

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

26TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2002

BROOME COUNTY SELECTED TO RECEIVE \$200,000 BROWNFIELDS GRANT

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that Broome County has been selected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to receive a Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots award in the amount of \$200,000. The grant will be used to help the county prevent, assess and safely clean up brownfields to promote their sustainable reuse.

"This is going to be a big help to economic development in Broome County," said Hinchey. "Removing environmental concerns from old industrial sites is a great incentive for redevelopment."

Brownfields are moderately contaminated sites, typically in urban areas, where redevelopment is complicated by environmental contamination. It is estimated that there are 450,000 brownfields sites nationwide. Broome County has identified 83 brownfields as potential targets for this pilot program. Occupying over 1,800 acres, these sites include former dry cleaning facilities, metal forging plants, high-technology manufacturing facilities, pesticide storage areas, and dumpsites.

"This grant will fit quite nicely into the county's Economic Development Strategy, which emphasizes Quality Community principals," said Chris W. Burger, Chairman of the county legislature's Economic Development and Planning Committee. "It will help serve the dual purpose of cleaning up blighted areas while encouraging economic growth. It will also help to preserve the quality environment this area is known for."

EPA initiated a program to address brownfields and awarded the first brownfields assessment grant in 1993. By the end of fiscal year 2000, the agency had made grants to 362 communities. In January 2002 a new law authorized Congress to spend \$250 million a year from 2002 through 2006. The law also clarifies liability issues associated with brownfields and removes significant barriers to participation.